

Student and Staff Perspectives on Diversity and Inclusion in student exchanges

**SIEM report launch
31 March 2021**



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

SIEM Project

More opportunities in life for young people from disadvantaged background by increasing their participation in the Erasmus+ programme.



Widening participation of less advantaged and underrepresented groups



Increase the **interaction** between International students and **local communities of underrepresented groups** in order to increase intercultural exchange and visibility of international student mobility.

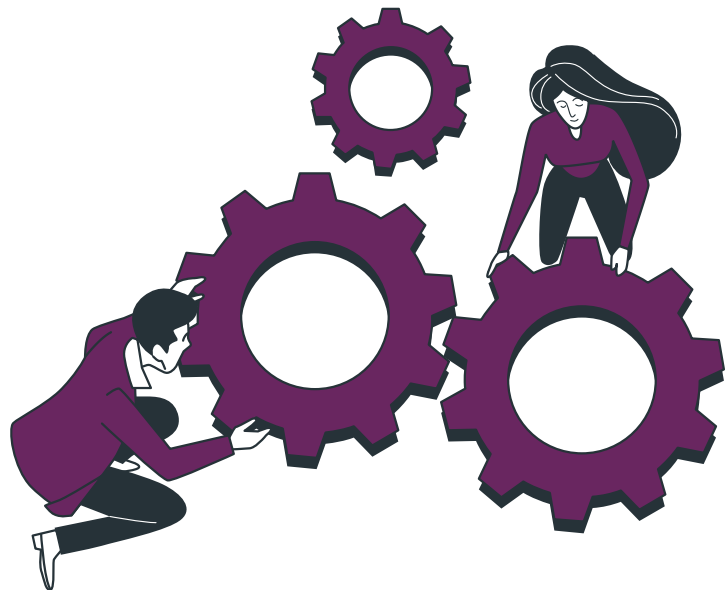


Making the Erasmus+ programme more **inclusive**



Co-funded by the
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SiEM Project partners



**Diverse
partnership**

European networks, &
Universities, National
Student Organisations

**Cross sectoral
collaboration**

higher education,
inclusion organisations
& youth work

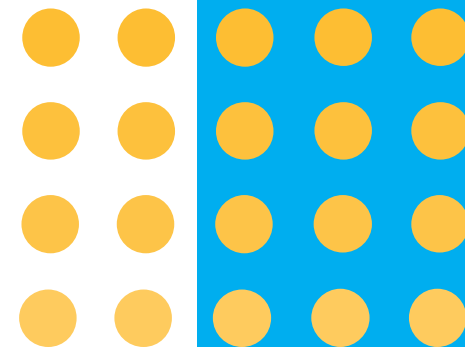




“Maybe it will be different abroad”

Research Report:

Student and Staff Perspectives on
Diversity and Inclusion in student
exchanges





Methodology

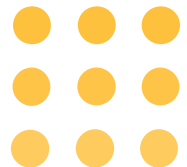
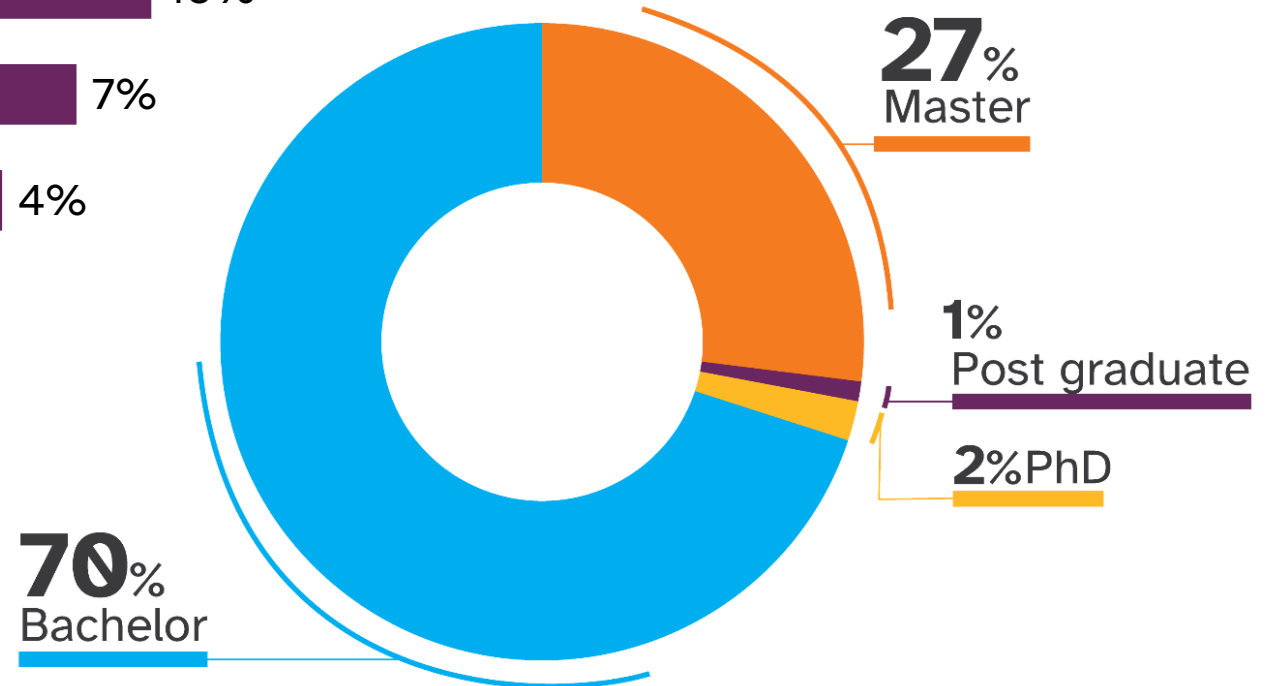
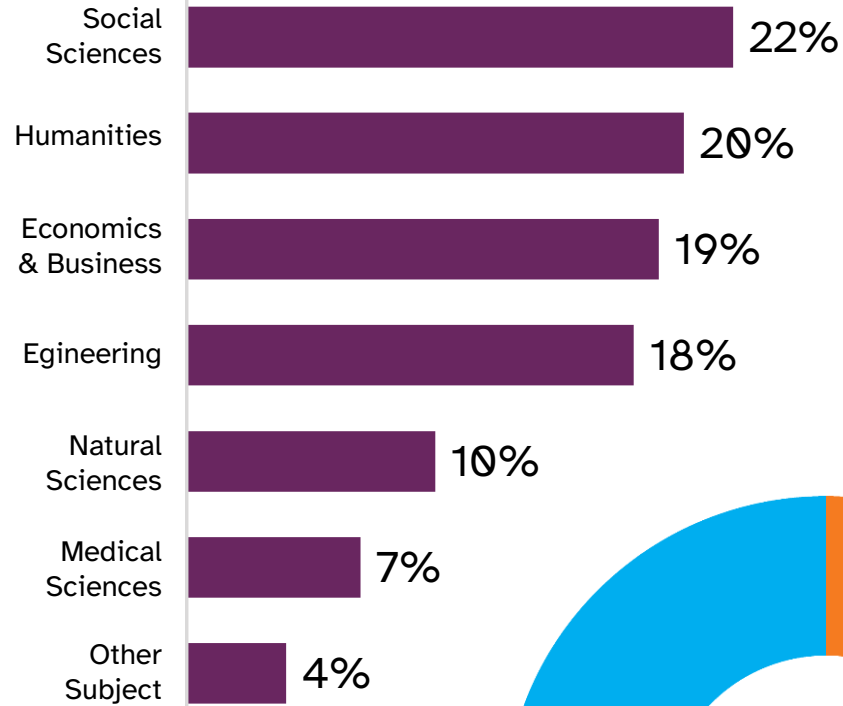
- **Student survey**
(12,820 responses)
- **Staff survey**
(786 responses)
- **Focus Groups**
6 focus groups with 36 students in 4 countries
- **Study visits**
6 institutions

Respondents profile

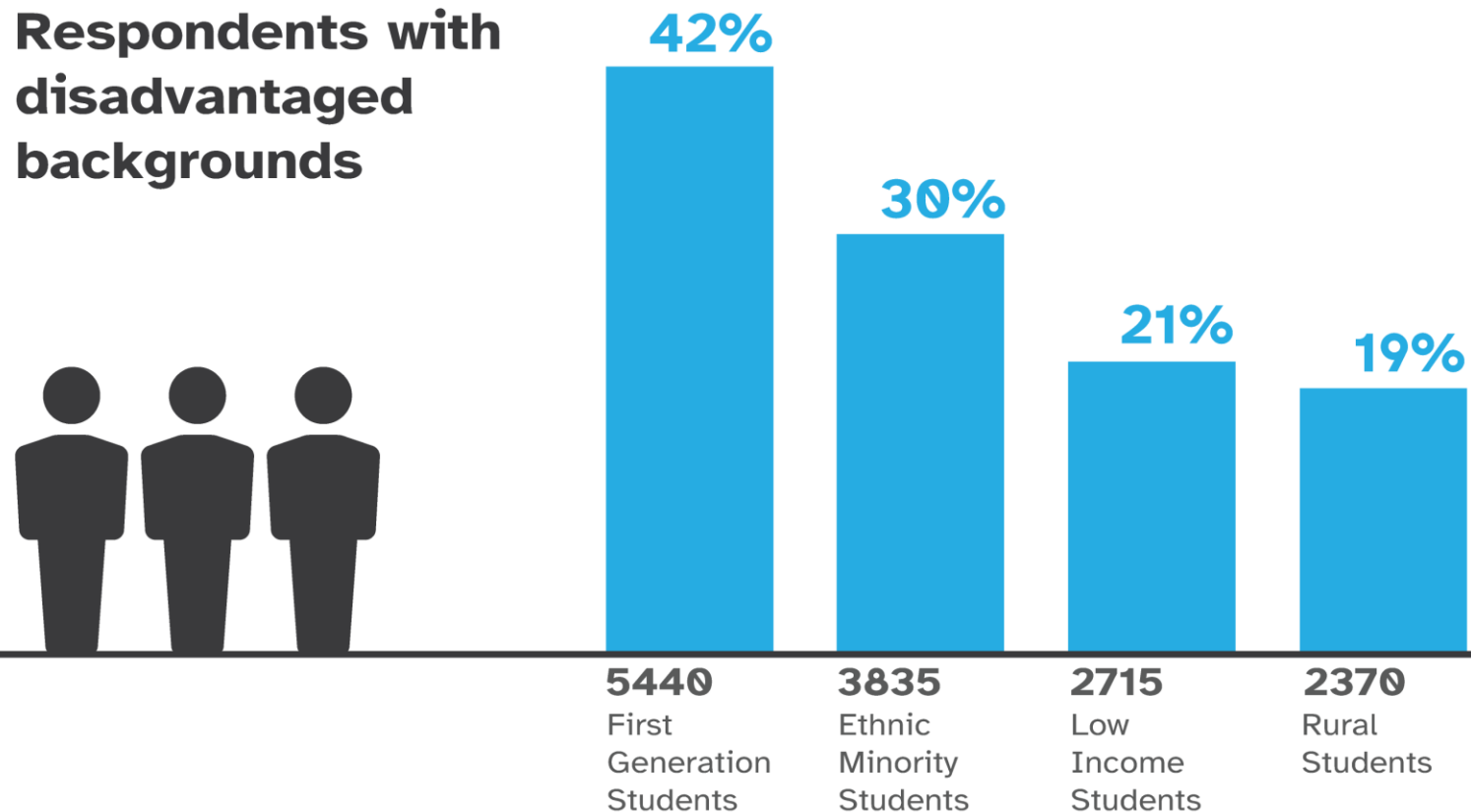


65%
mobile
students

35%
non-mobile
students

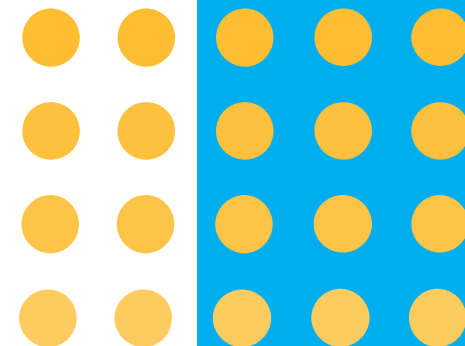


Defining students with fewer opportunities



Key Findings & Recommendations

1. **Strategy & offer**
2. **Student support**
3. **Costs of living & financial support**
4. **Barriers to mobility**
5. **Experiences: Challenges & Impact**



Strategy & offer

Findings



Mobility strategy

93%

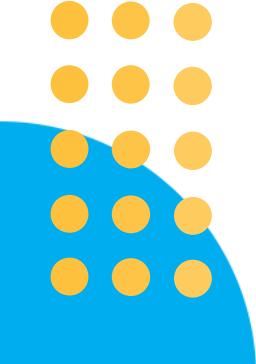
Outgoing mobility is included in **93%** of staff survey respondents' institutions' **strategic plans**

A third of respondents include reference to **disadvantaged groups** in their strategy.

Staff impressions: Does the institution have a Diversity & Inclusion Strategy



Response	All	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Yes	67%	93%	69%	39%
No	30%	1%	28%	58%
Total	765	65	500	105



Staff results: Students groups with fewer opportunities

Q. Which students would be classified as less advantaged or underrepresented groups at your institution?

Student Group	All	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Students from low-income households	71%	81%	70%	66%
Students from rural areas	25%	29%	19%	31%
Students from minority ethnic groups or with a migration background	47%	67%	50%	32%
Students from Roma and Traveller communities	26%	49%	26%	33%
Students who are first in family to go to university, pioneer students	27%	65%	27%	8%
Students living with disabilities	61%	71%	63%	57%
Students who are care providers, students with dependants, including student parents	40%	68%	41%	36%
Students with religious beliefs	7%	14%	6%	9%
LGBT+ students	17%	32%	14%	18%
Mature students, life-long learners	24%	56%	22%	20%
None of the above	7%	5%	6%	11%
Total	765	65	500	105

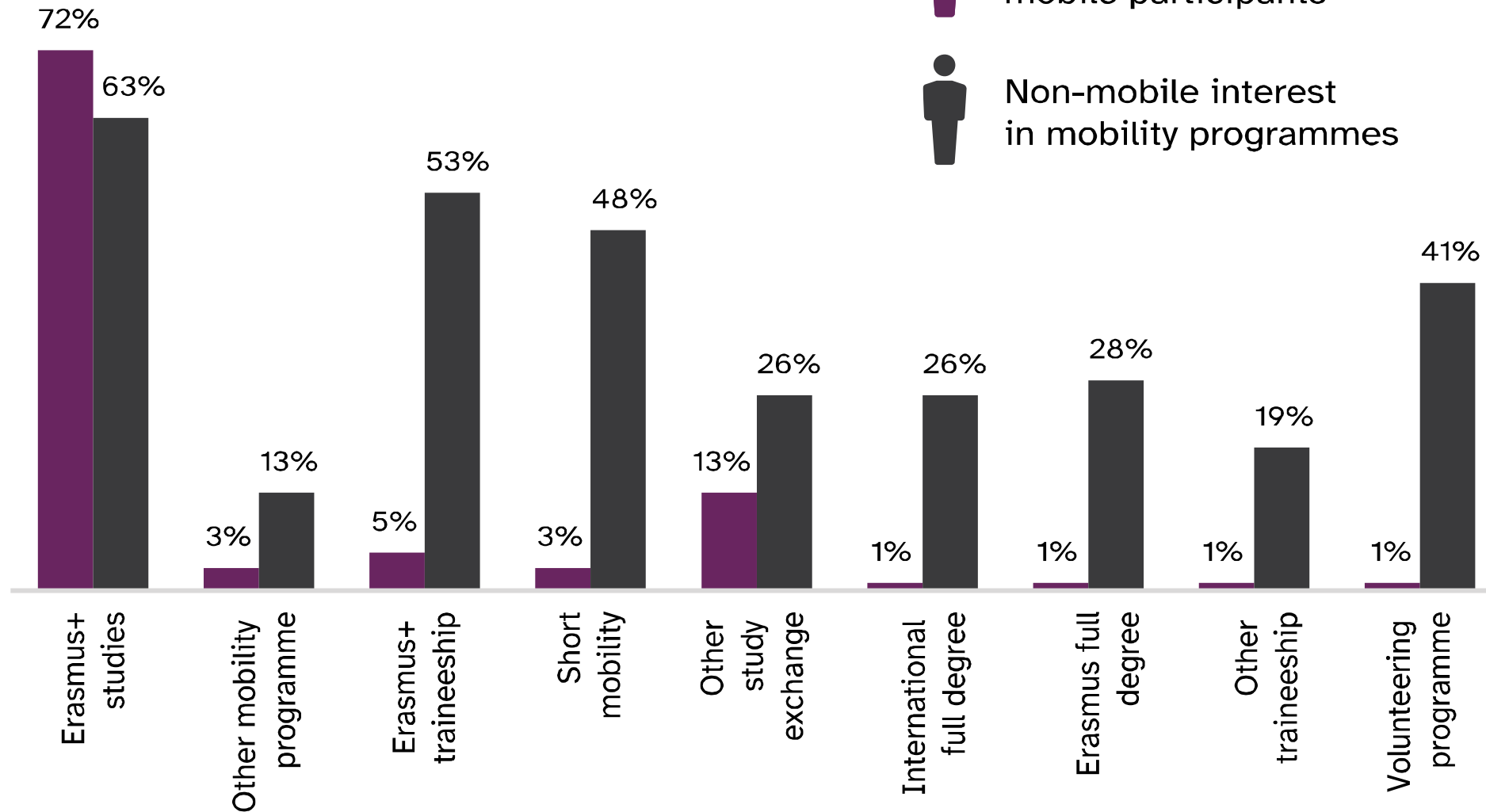
Student impressions: Mobility programmes



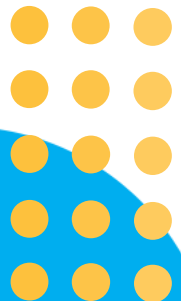
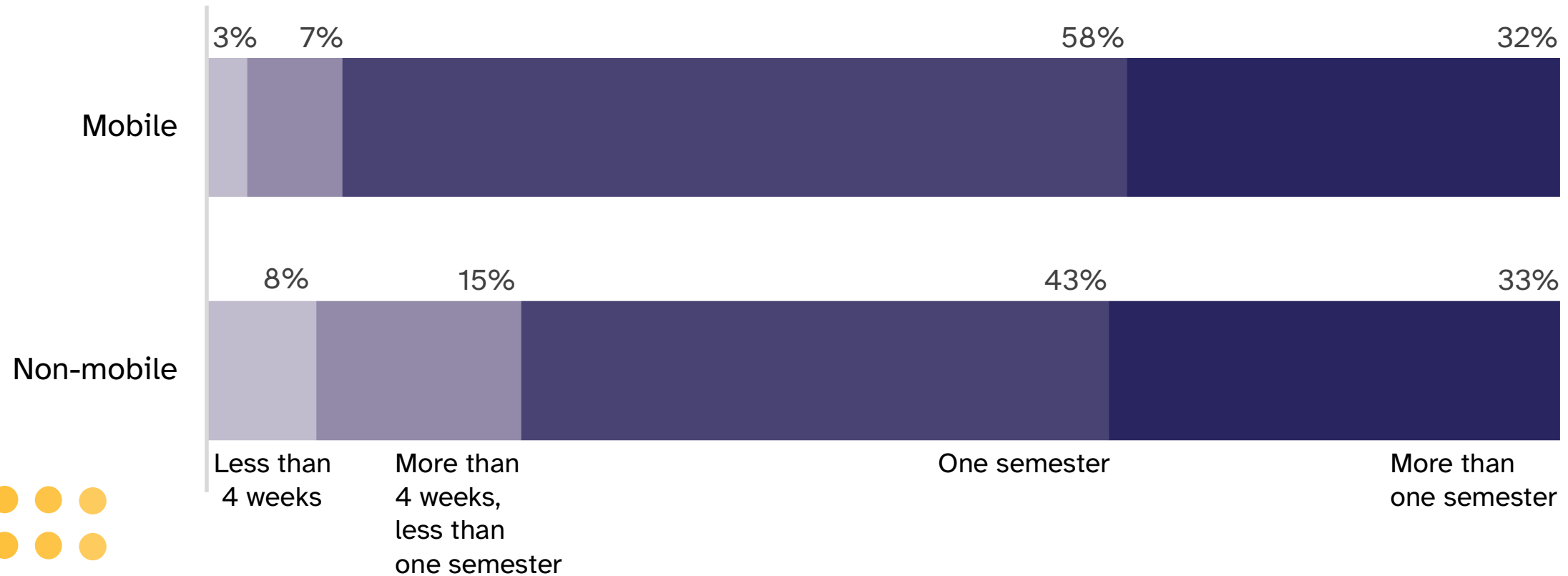
mobility programme of
mobile participants



Non-mobile interest
in mobility programmes



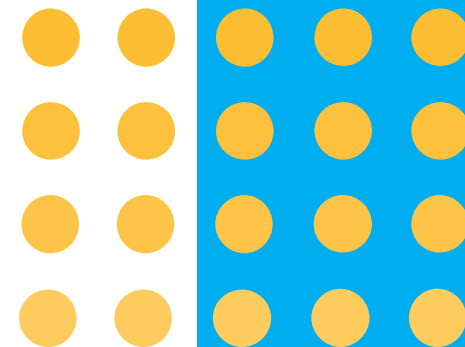
Student impressions: Mobility duration: actual participation versus preference





Strategy & Offer

Recommendations



1. Define 'fewer opportunities'



Define student groups that have fewer opportunities

European Commission

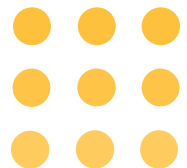
- Facilitate a common understanding.
- Coordinate a common data standard.
- Monitor national plans.

Higher Education Institutions

- Define student groups with fewer opportunities based on local contacts.

International Student Org.

- Know the barriers students face in the local context.



2. Develop a strategy

Develop a strategy with targets in order to ensure all students with fewer opportunities are supported.



European Commission

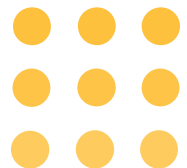
- Ensure that **support** is available for institutions to **develop inclusion strategies**.

National Agencies

- Ensure policy actions are in place to support **all underrepresented** groups.

Higher Education Institutions

- Develop inclusion strategies.
- Align with national action plans.



3. Diversify programme offer

Offer different types of mobility programmes across study, work and volunteer opportunities that will appeal to different student groups.



European Commission

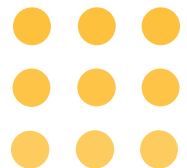
- Ensure short term mobilities are embedded in the internationalisation strategy.

National Agencies

- Ensure short term mobilities are embedded in the internationalisation strategy

Higher Education Institutions

- Offer different mobility programmes with a variety of durations.



4. Enhance collaboration

Offer different types of mobility programmes across study, work and volunteer opportunities that will appeal to different student groups.

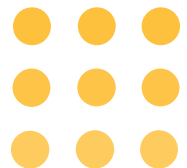


National Agencies

- Increase collaboration at the national level with both Governmental agencies and civil society organisations

Higher Education Institutions

- Appoint inclusive mobility officers to facilitate the work among departments
- Offer different mobility programmes with a variety of durations.



5. Work with students

Collaborate with student groups at your institution, as well as mobility alumni to improve the programmes on offer.



National Agencies

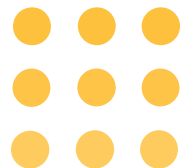
- Foster student networks
- Empower alumni ambassadors

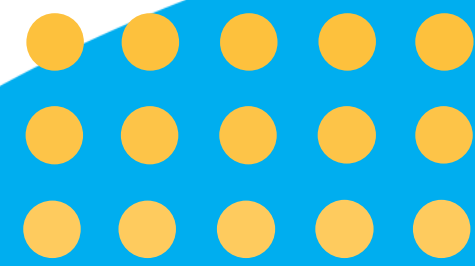
Higher Education Institutions

- Include students in the strategy development
- Structural support for students

International Student Org.

- Actively contribute to the dialogue.





Student support Findings



Pre-departure support

What did mobile students **find useful** when preparing for their mobility?

94%

information about
available funding

88%

support with the
application process

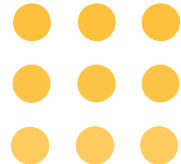
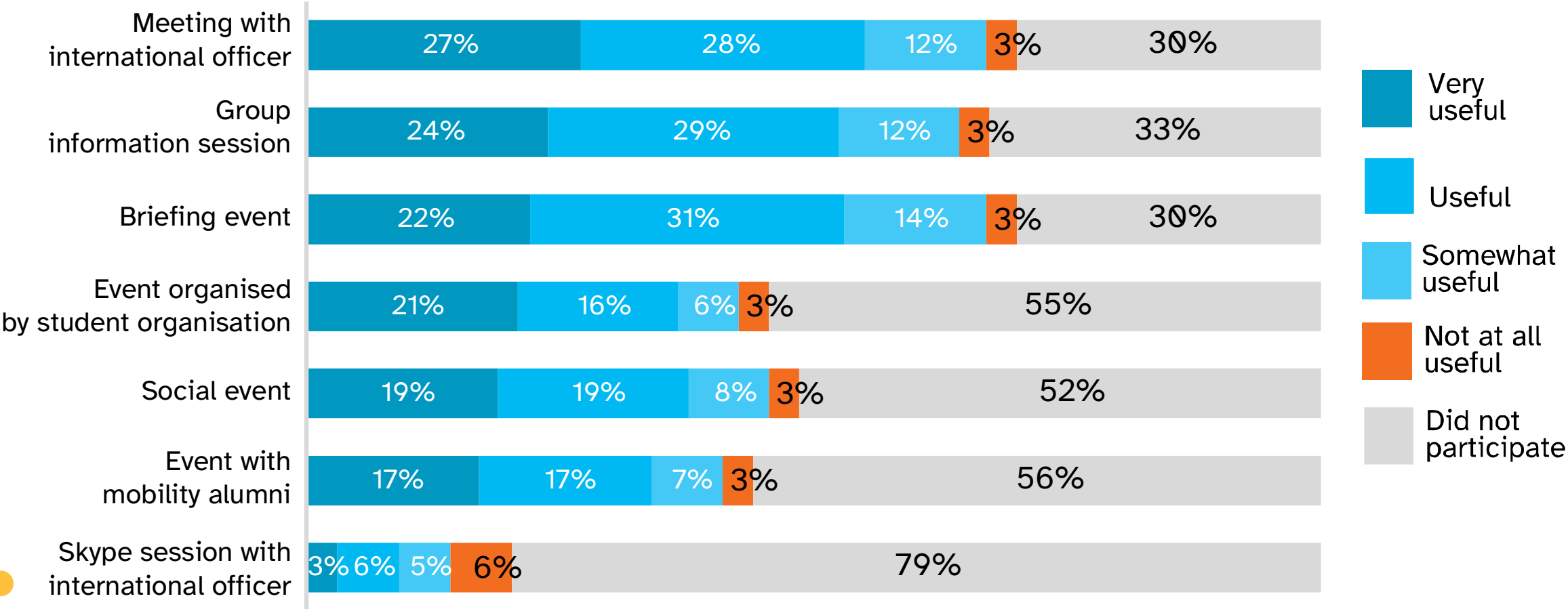
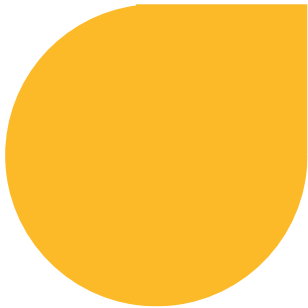
86%

help choosing
a host university

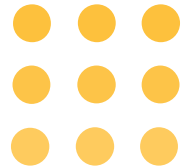
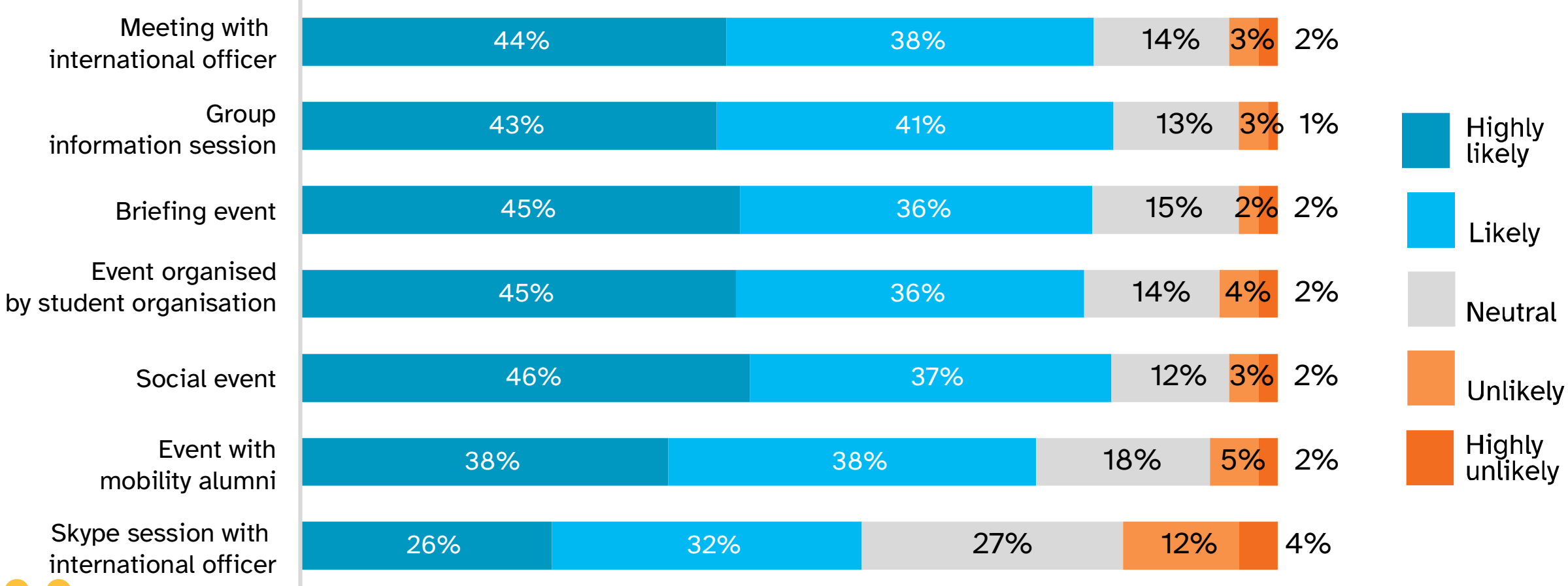
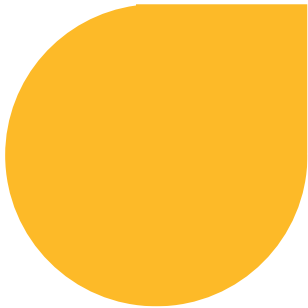



Just over half of mobile respondents found meetings with international officers (55%), group information sessions (53%), and briefing events (53%) useful.

Mobile student impressions: Participation in pre-departure activities



Non-mobile student impressions: interest in pre-departure events





I was ill several times and started having problems with my mental health.

it's incredibly hard when you don't have people you can lean on.

- student quote

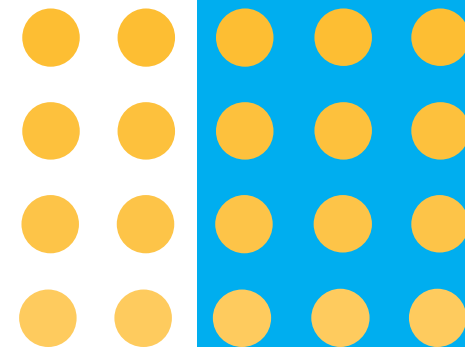


**Health concerns
raised by students**





Student support Recommendations



6. Provide in-country support for students



Assign students a key contact, both at the home institution and the host institution. Any support given to students should be provided in English or a shared language

National Agencies

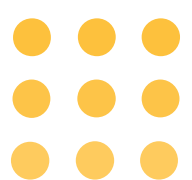
- Ensure nation-wide student services are accessible to international students

Higher Education Institutions

- Ensure that services are accessible and equal treatment is guaranteed.

International Student Org.

- Organise social and cultural integration activities



7. Ensure peer-to-peer engagement

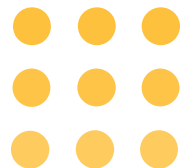
Connect mobile students with local students to help students navigate the new institution or organisation, as well as the local area.

Higher Education Institutions

- Support peer to peer initiatives

International Student Org.

- Organise buddy and ambassador systems
- Organise community engagement initiatives

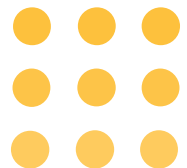


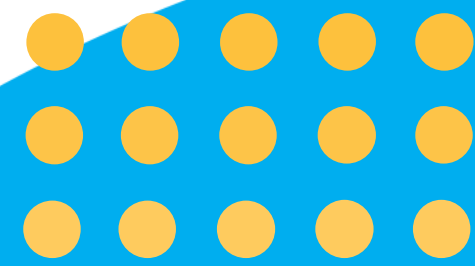
8. Support student health abroad

Provide physical and mental health that are accessible to outgoing and incoming mobile students.

Higher Education Institutions

- Support with information about insurance and health issues abroad.
- Ensure health services are available to support students off site (virtually).
- Ensure on-campus support is accessible to incoming international students.





Barriers to mobility

Findings



3 Barrier types



Institutional

barriers that **reflect the programmes** that are being offered and the **regulations that coincide** with these programmes that may **impact the access** of specific student groups to mobility opportunities.

Environmental

Environmental and **societal factors** that influence the person's decisions to take part in a mobility.

access to information as well as **personal backgrounds** impact mobility participation.

Attitudinal

Attitudinal barriers tackle the **belief system and emotions** around the topic of mobility opportunities, to see how they influence their participation rates.

internalised barriers can severely impact their identification with the opportunity.

Barriers to mobility



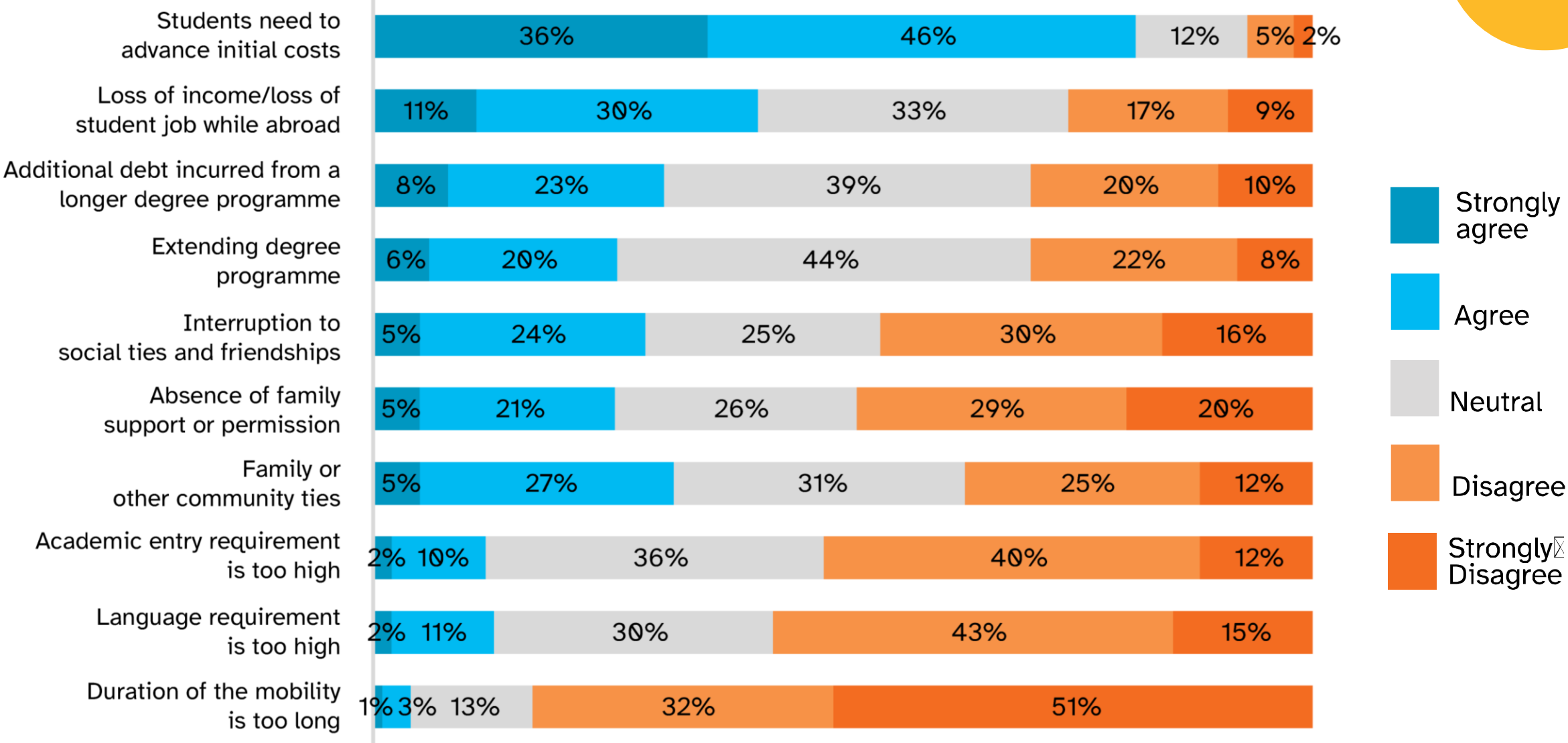
of students reported advancing initial costs to be a barrier to participate in mobility.


“I am someone who has to combine five jobs to pay for my room and studies.”

“I have to spend everything I earn immediately. Saving for Erasmus is therefore extremely difficult.”

- student quote

Mobile participants' reported practical barriers to mobility





***“The bureaucracy:
the pile of information
raises even more
questions.”***

*“Lots of forms and papers
to fill, the information was
structured badly...”*

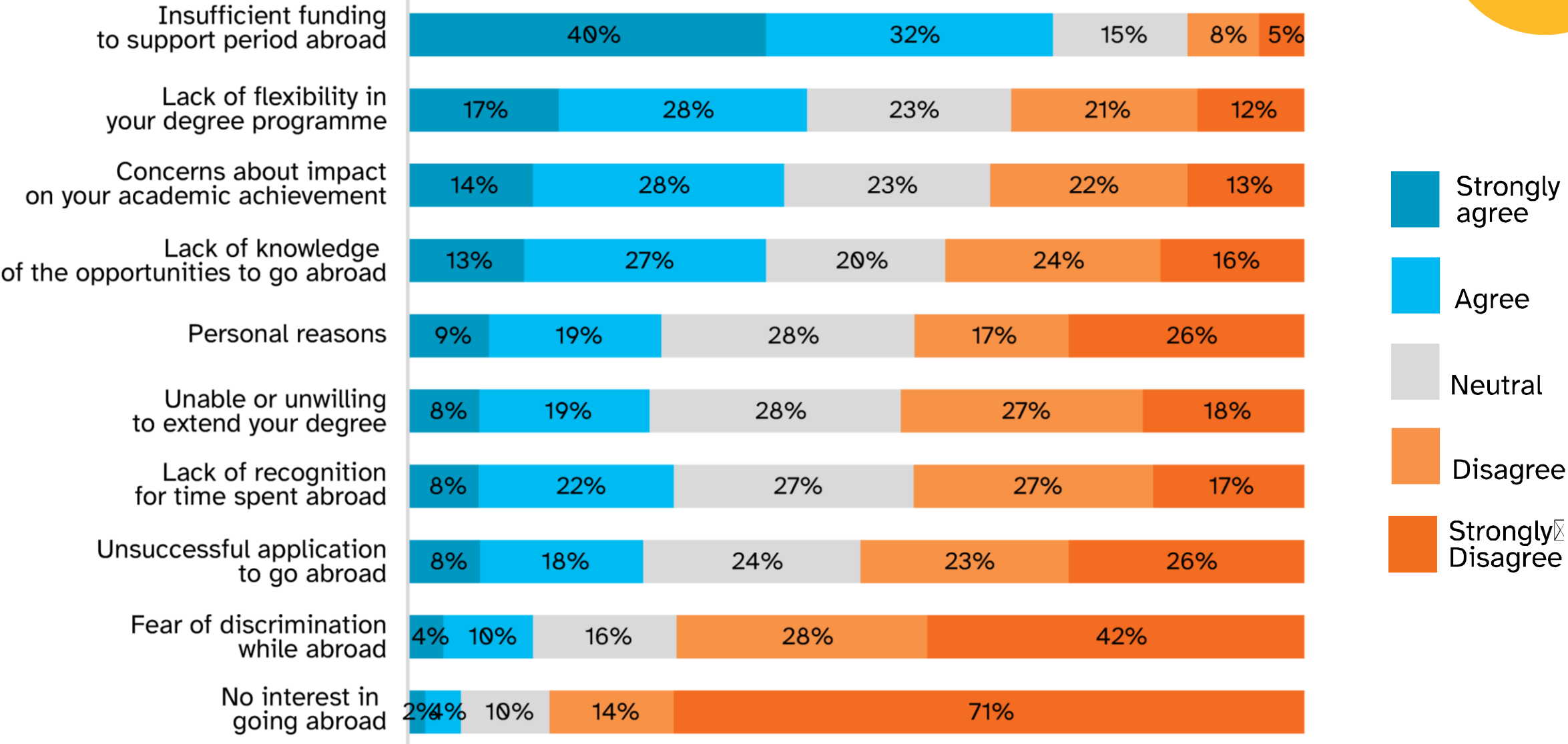
- student quote



**Administrative barriers
make the process difficult to
follow**



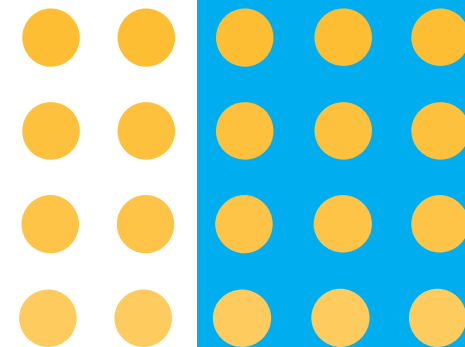
Non-mobile students' blocking factors to go abroad





Barriers to mobility

Recommendations



10. Streamline processes

Ensure that the application process is easy to navigate, and where possible simplify the process by removing unnecessary paperwork or steps in the procedure.

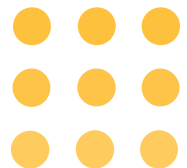


National Agencies

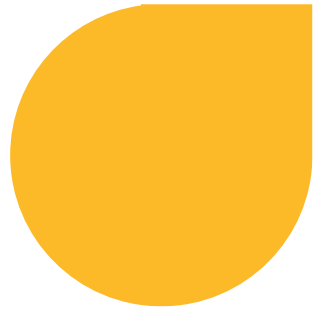
- Foster exchange of best practices in meetings

Higher Education Institutions

- Provide direct guidance
- Transparent procedures at institutional level
- Set timeline for students.
- Set contact point



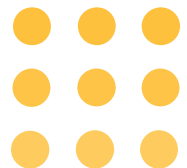
11. Outline Academic attainment



Provide information on how the mobility programme will contribute to the students' academic progress. If a specific academic threshold is a requirement of a mobility programme, ensure that this is balanced with other criteria.

Higher Education Institutions

- Balance academic requirements with other criteria such as personal motivation and background.



12. Encourage students to discuss concerns

Create a safe space where the student can discuss their fears without judgement, and if needed seek specialist advice to respond to the students' queries.

National Agencies

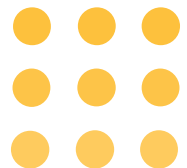
- Collaborate with student representatives in order to better understand the challenges

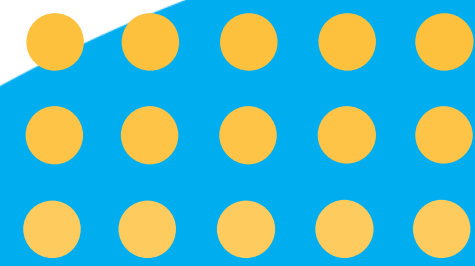
Higher Education Institutions

- Clear com. channels and reference persons
- Organise feedback sessions

International Student Org.

- offer peer to peer support
- Collaborate with HEIs to improve experience





Costs of living & financial support

Findings



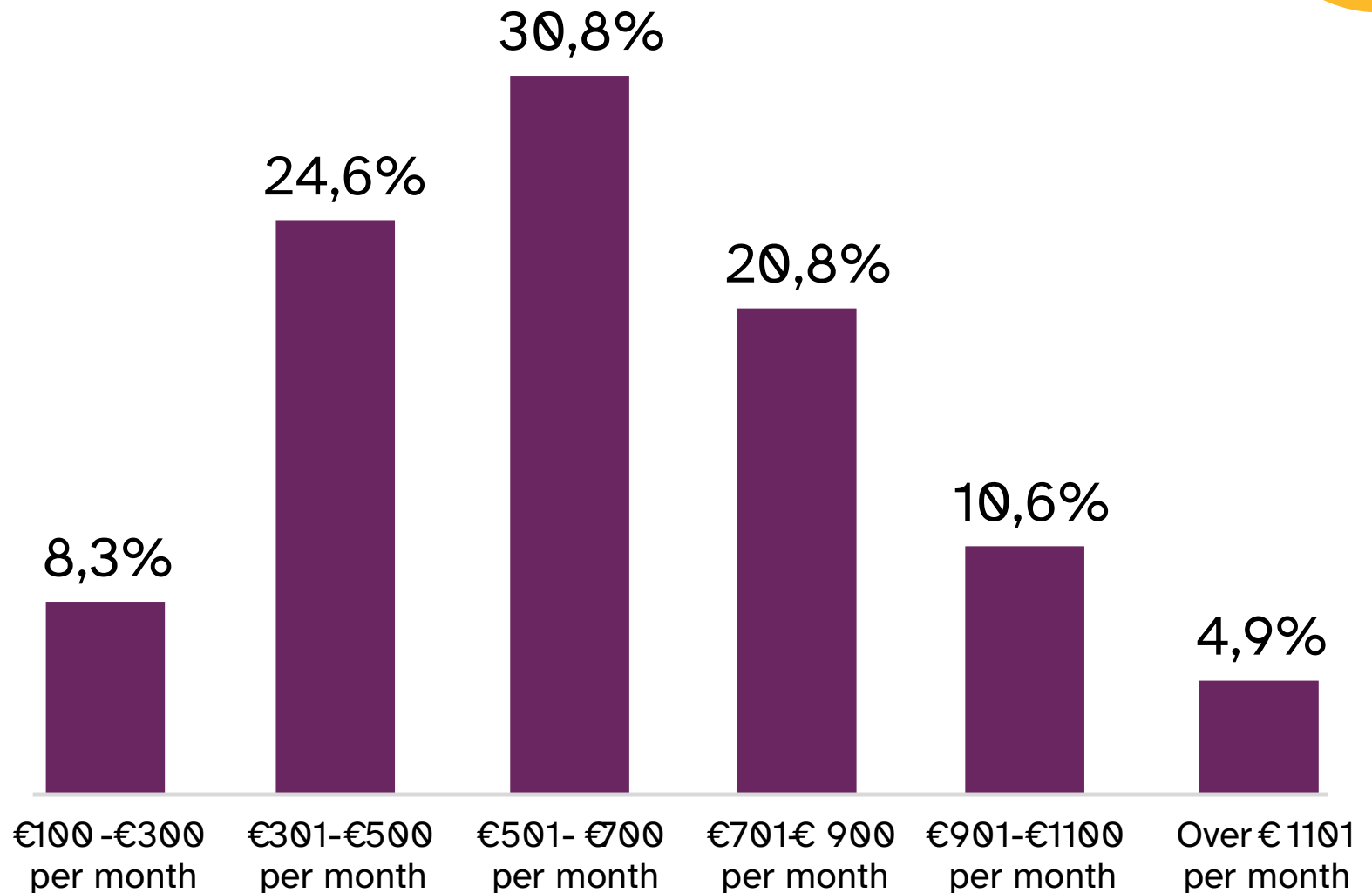
67%

of students reported a monthly living cost **over 501 EUR.**

73%

Of staff reported a monthly living cost **over 501 EUR.**

Cost of living per month reported by mobile students



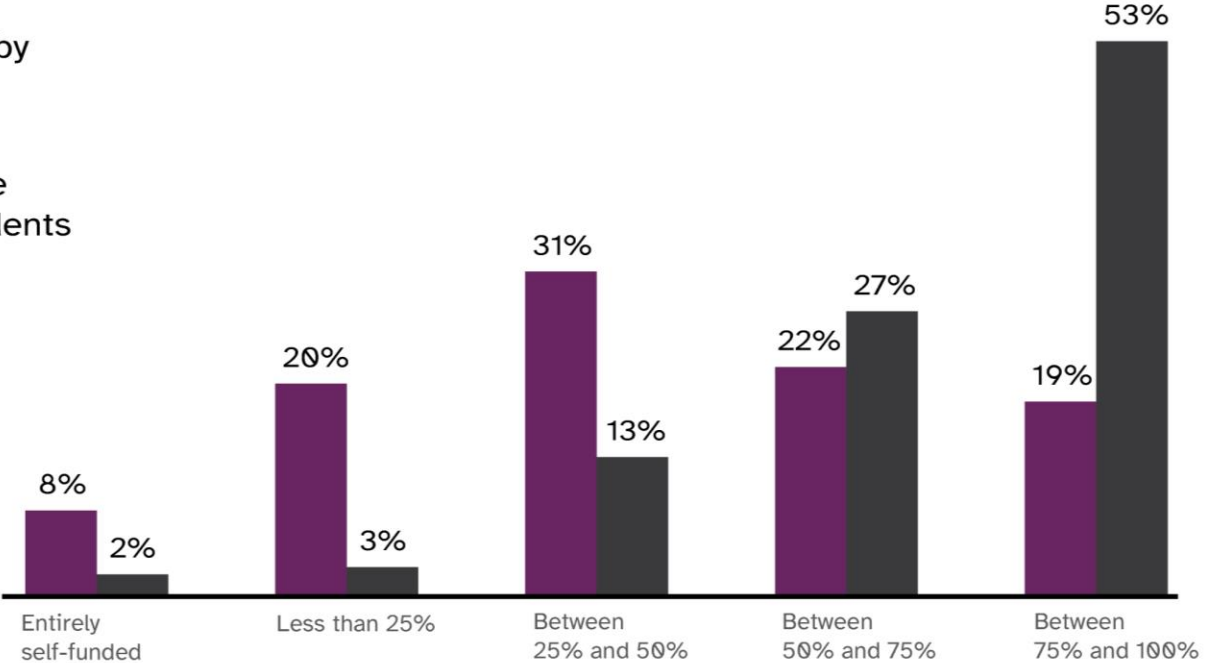
Financial support offered versus needed



Actual grant coverage by mobile respondents

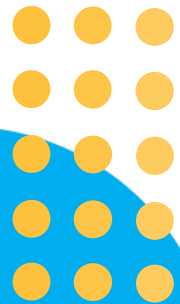


Needed grant coverage by non-mobile respondents



59%
received less than 50% financial support

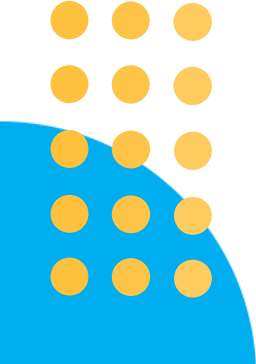
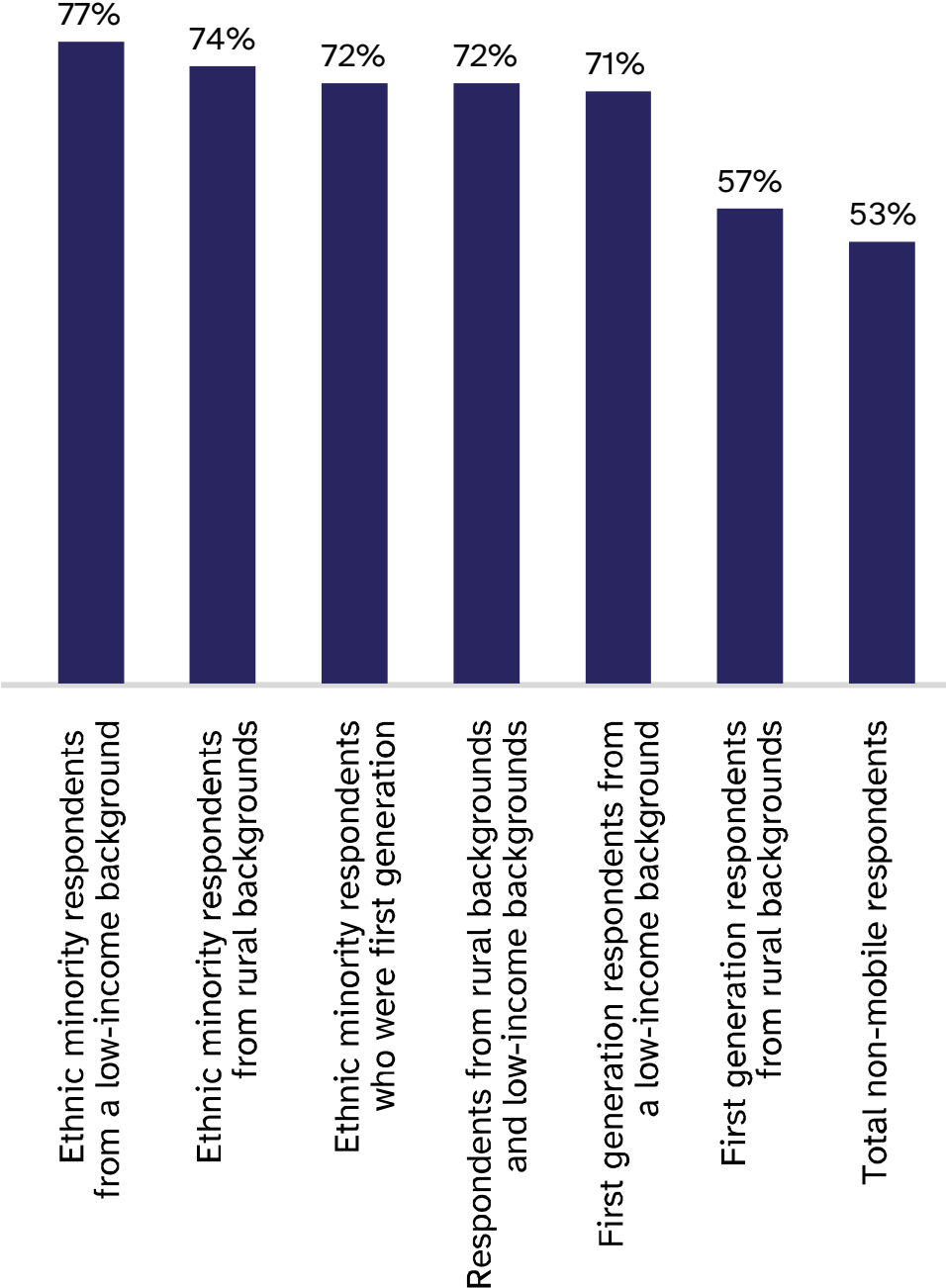
80%
indicated they would need more than 50% financial support



Student impressions: financial support offered versus needed

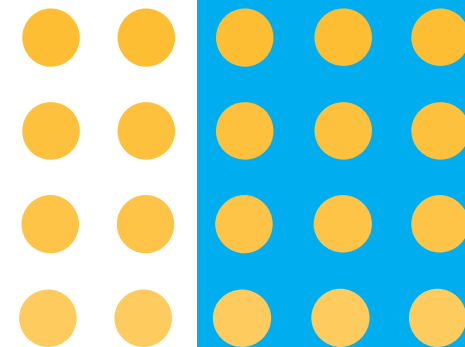
Students with fewer opportunities indicated they needed 75% of their mobility costs covered **at a higher rate.**

Intersectionality has a **big influence**





Costs of living & Financial Support Recommendations



9. Provide financial support

provide structured funding in the form of grants and scholarships to support study, work or volunteering abroad opportunities.



European Commission

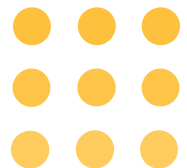
- Ensure transparent information on the financial support.
- grants cover a substantial amount

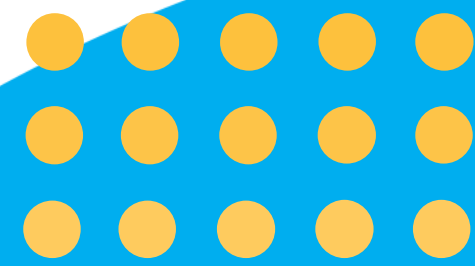
National Agencies

- Ensure transparent procedures
- Apply top-up for fewer opportunity students

Higher Education Institutions

- Pay scholarships on time
- Offer installment plans
- Full duration support



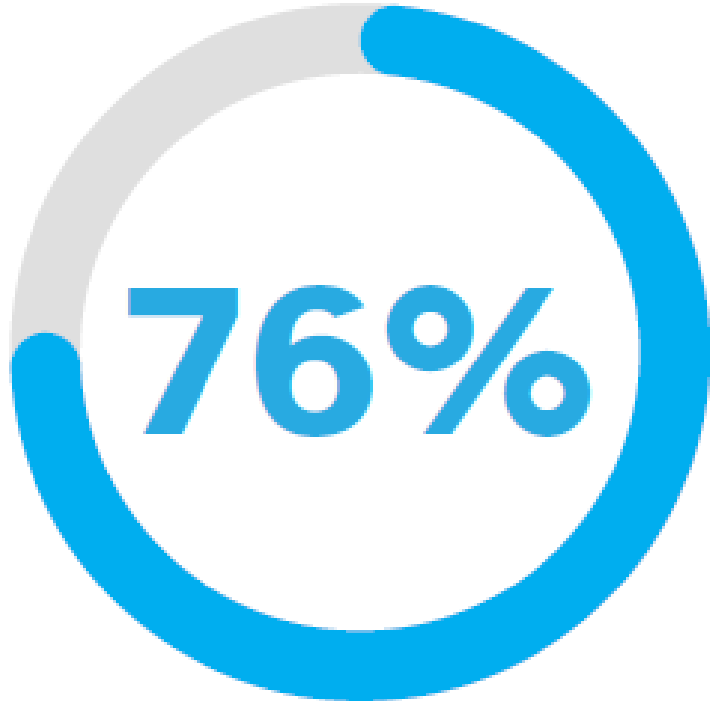


Experiences: Challenges & Impact

Findings



Student impressions: Inclusion & Equality of international students



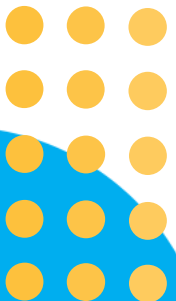
had **positive** experiences while abroad.

10%

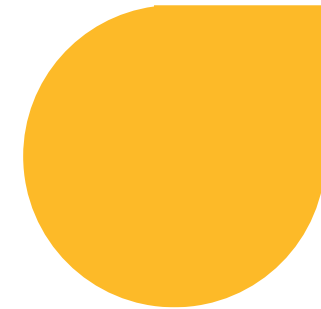
of students felt that they were treated differently or unfairly at their host university

15%

felt that they did not have equal access to resources and opportunities compared to home students.

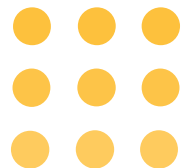
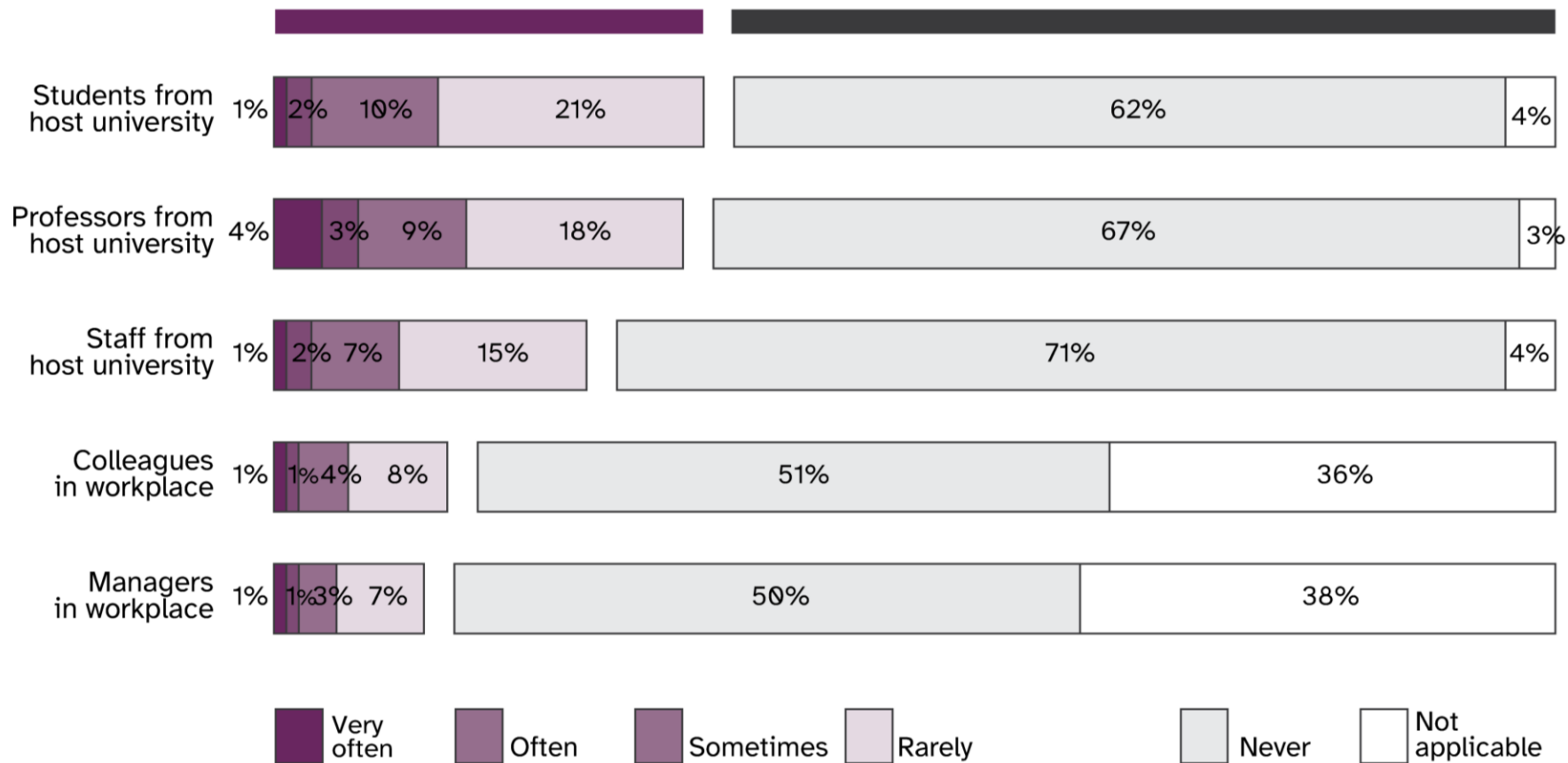


Student impression: treatment by members of the host society



34% felt treated unfairly or negatively at some point during their exchange

66% never felt treated unfairly or negatively during their exchange



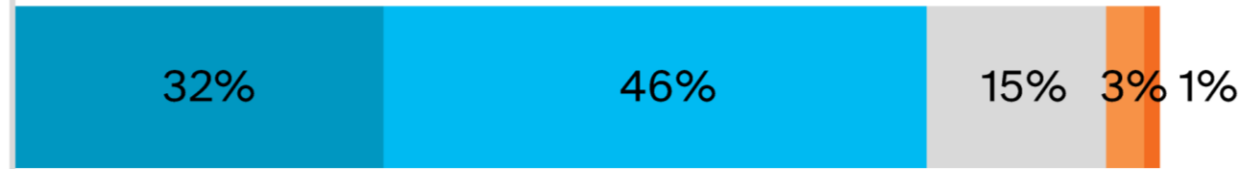
Staff impressions: Inclusion & Equality of international students



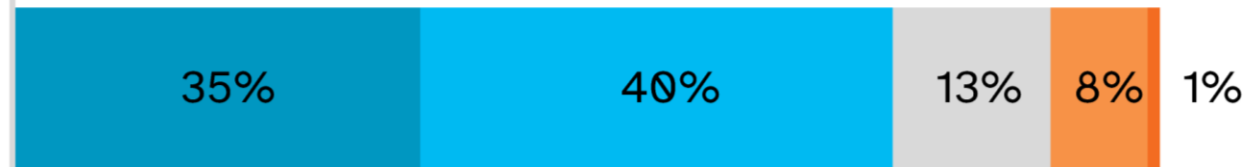
Insensitive, degrading or insulting remarks made about international students are addressed through a university process



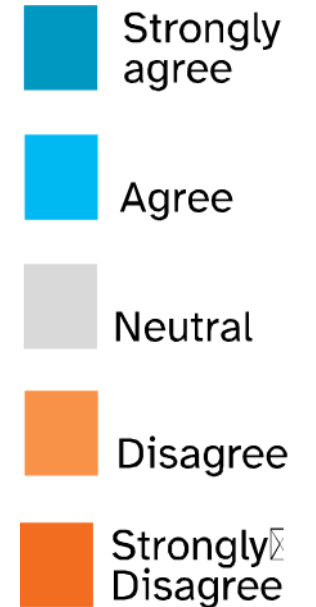
Measures are in place to support international students in their academic work



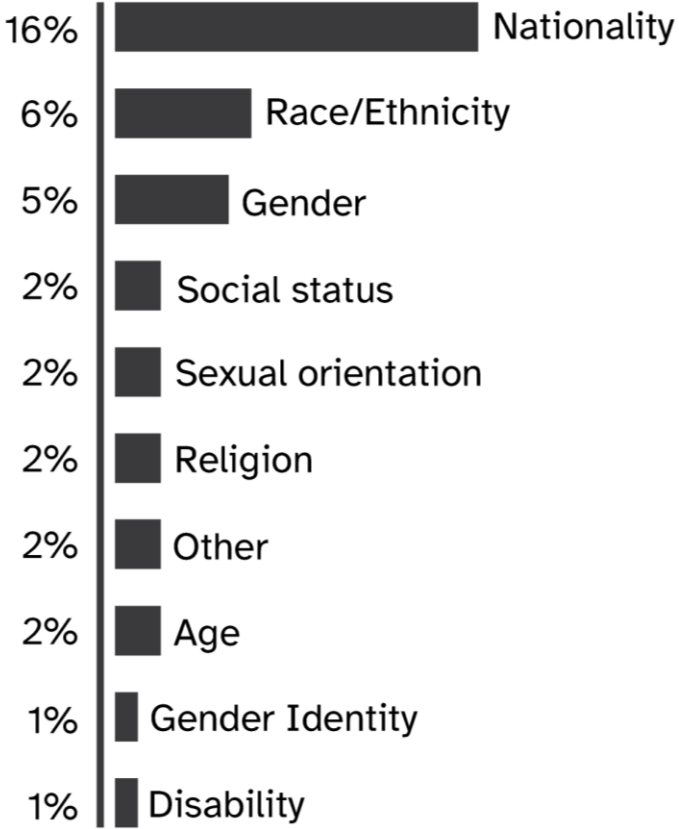
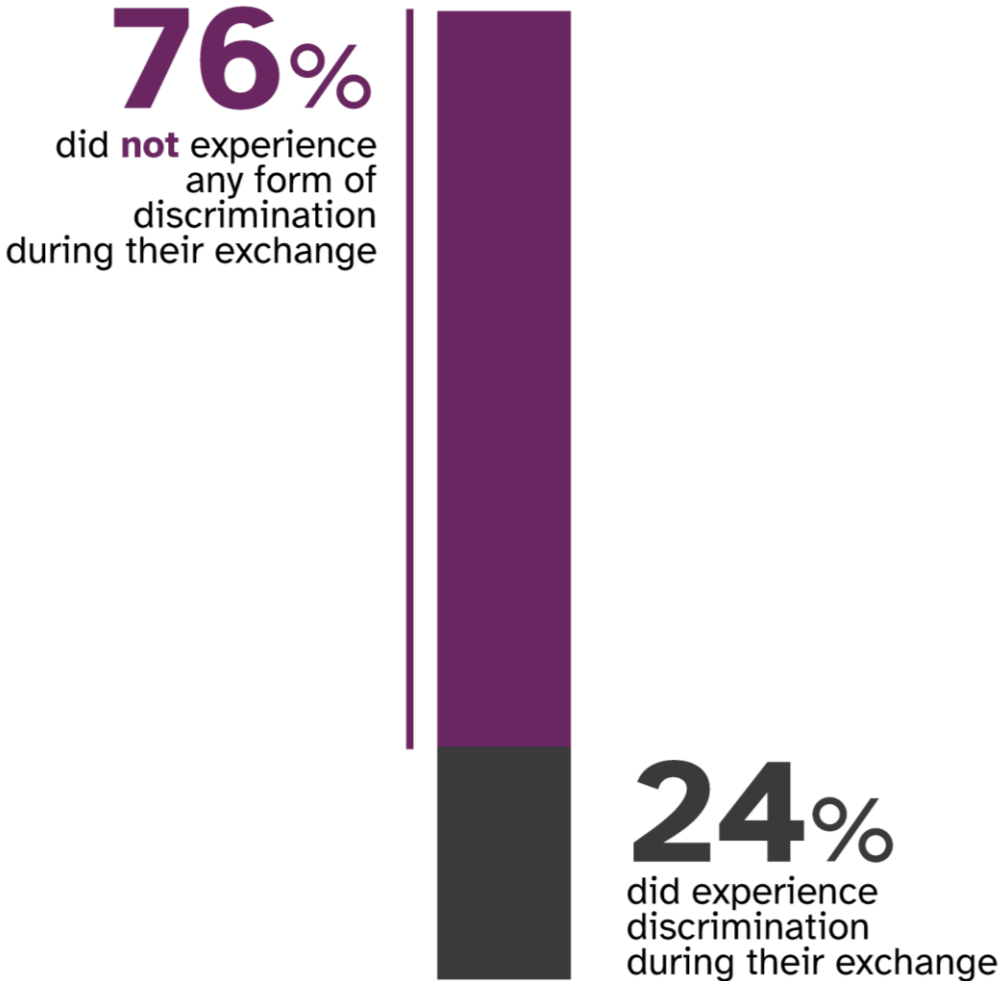
International students have equal access to opportunities compared to local students



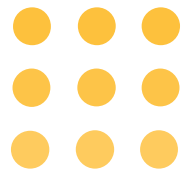
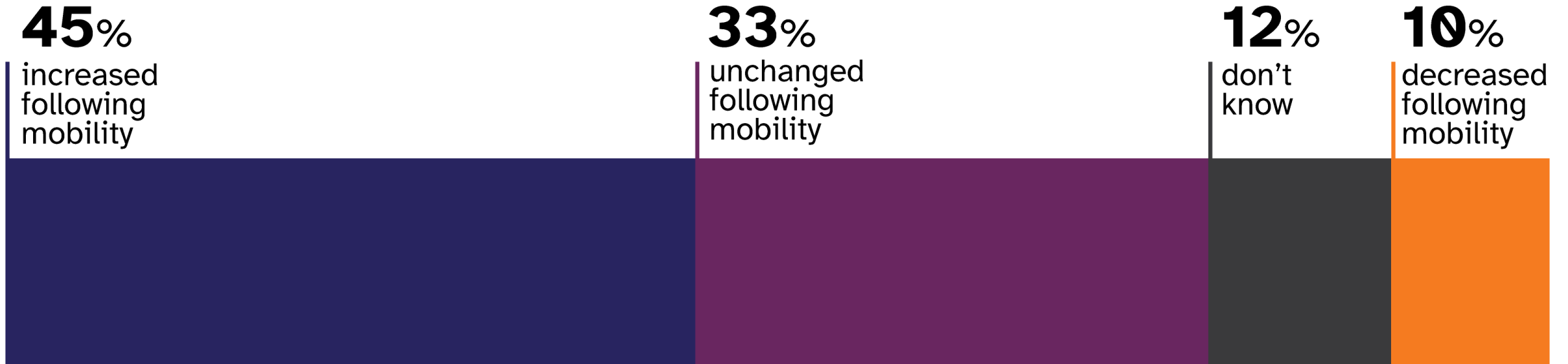
International students have equal access to resources compared to local students



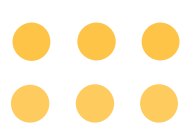
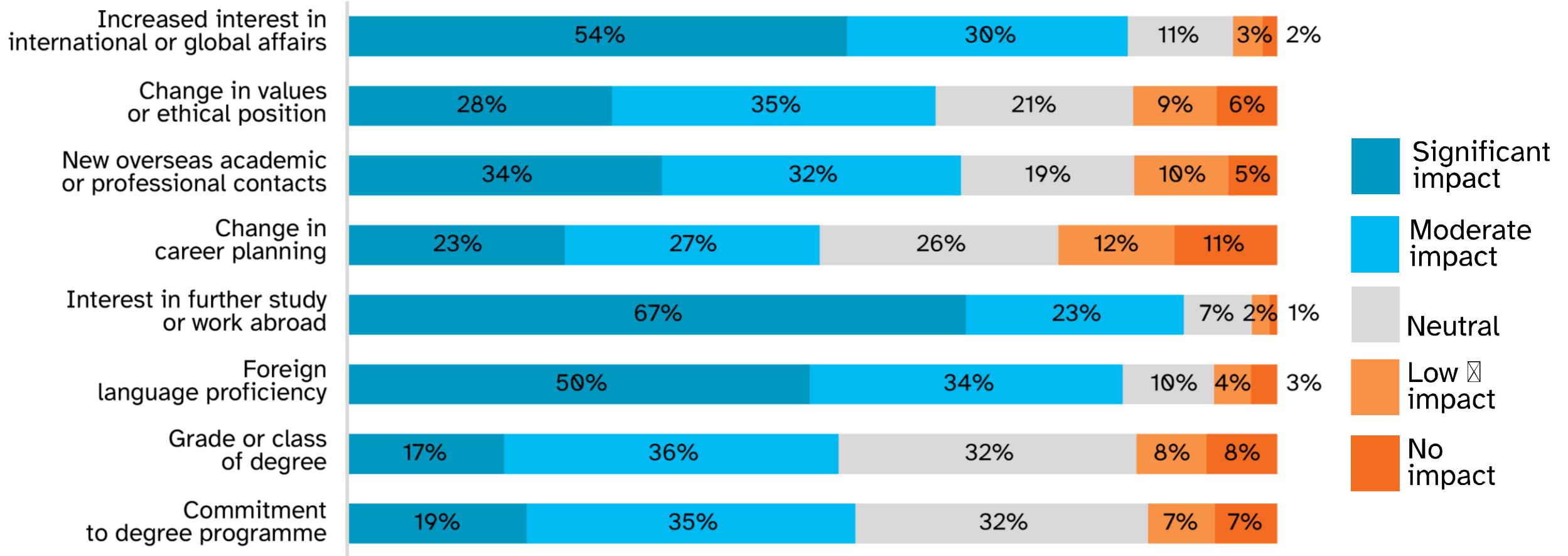
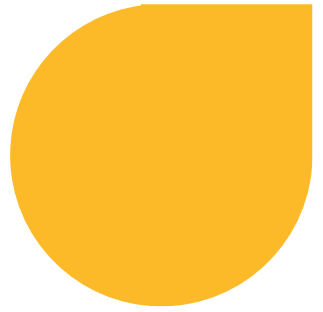
Student impression: discrimination on exchange



Student impression: impact on academic achievement



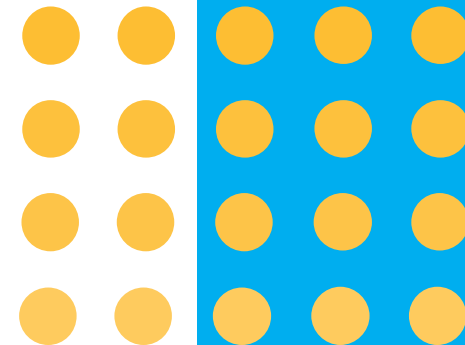
Student impression: impact on academic achievement





Experiences: Challenges & Impact

Recommendations



13. Develop a crisis plan

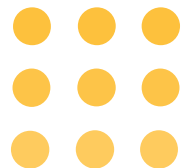
Prepare to support students in an emergency, signpost transparent procedures and contact points in case negative experiences do happen.

Higher Education Institutions

- Ensure crisis plans take into account internationals
- Signpost procedures and contact point

International Student Org.

- Create a safe space for students to address positive and negative experiences.



14. Engage local and regional authorities



Work together with local municipalities and other local authorities to make them attentive to the role they play to ensure that the broader cultural environment is hospitable towards international students.

National Agencies

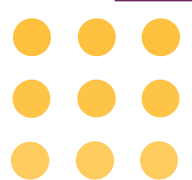
Ensure that local and regional authorities are aware about existing student mobility frameworks

Higher Education Institutions

Work together with local municipalities in order to ensure better integration of international students

International Student Org.

Organise activities together with local stakeholders to integrate the international students





Research Report

An extensive **research report** that gathers input of 12.000 students and 750 staff members across Europe and beyond on the inclusion in international student exchanges.

The research report showcases the **14 recommendations** targeting

- European Commission
- National Agencies
- Higher Education institutions
- International student organisations.

Guidelines for Inclusive Mobility Promotion

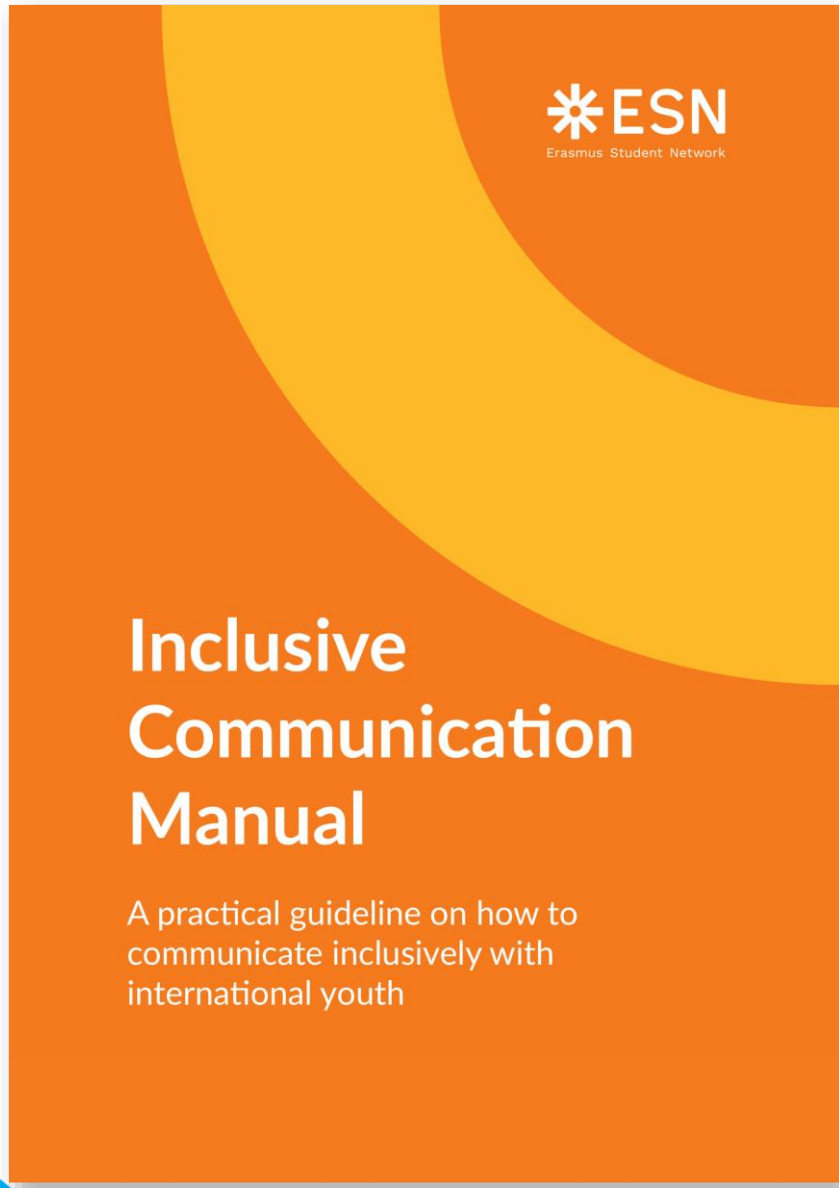
Supporting in- and outbound
student mobility



Guidelines for Inclusive Mobility Promotion

Handbook developed for International Relations Offices working with in- and outbound student mobility, primarily within the Erasmus+ programme.

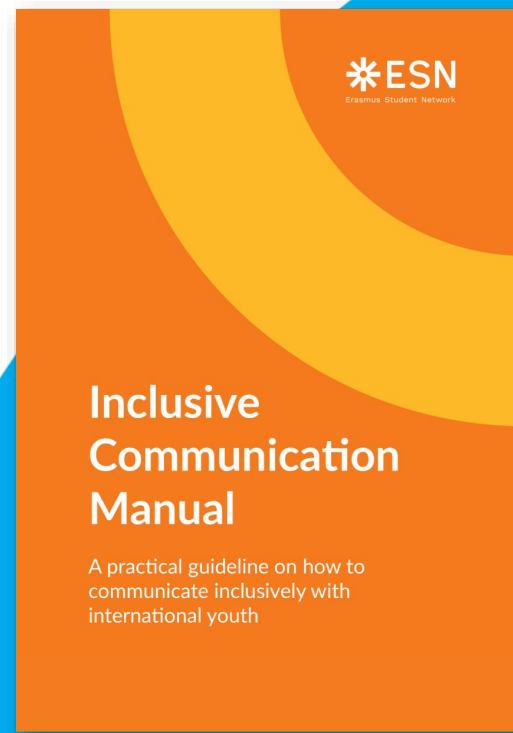
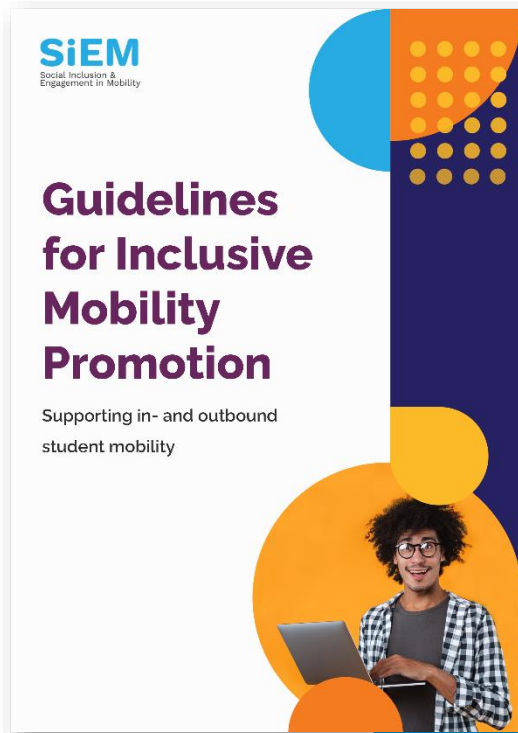
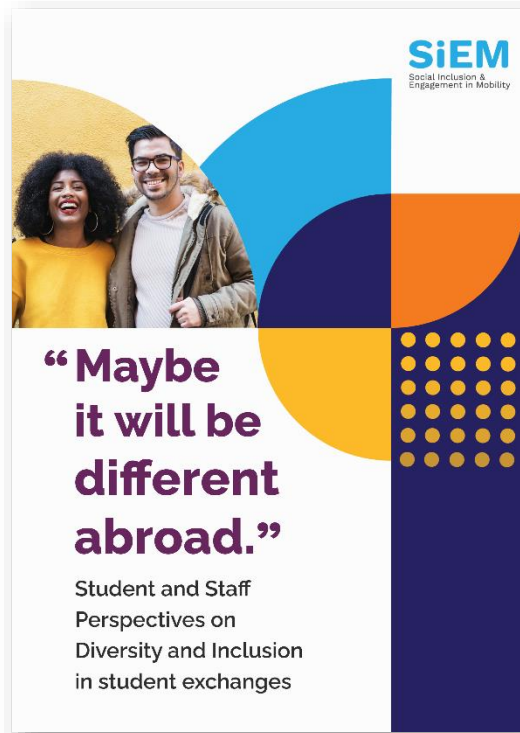
The Guidelines focus on how to make your **mobility promotion** more **inclusive** and **reach more students**.



Inclusive Communication Manual

A practical guideline on how to communicate inclusively with international youth for written, spoken and visual communication.

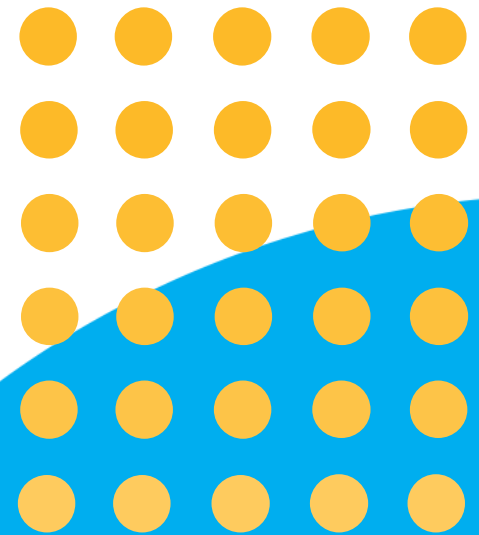
This manual focus on how to make general **communication** more **inclusive**.



Find our publications on
siem-project.eu/research



What is Next?



What is next in SIEM?

- **Research: Breakout reports & figures**

- Results for students in International Credit Mobility in collaboration with ASEF
- Factsheets per target group
- Country fact sheets

- **Support Inclusive Mobility promotion**

- Training for Higher Education on Inclusive Mobility Promotion
 - General workshop followed by group discussions throughout the implementation process for 2021-2022.

- **Community Engagement**

Local Engagement: ensuring a sense of belonging to the local community.

- Social Engagement Trainings for Students & Student Reps.
- Roll-out of local engagement initiatives to connect.
- Impact measurement tool.



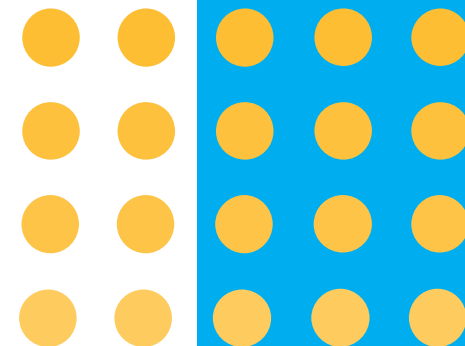
What else is happening in the field of Inclusion?

- **The New Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2021 is released**
 - Renewed chapter on learners with fewer opportunities.
 - An inclusion strategy will be rolled out.
- **ESNsurvey 2021**
 - Research on impact of COVID-19 and experiences of students.
- **InclusiveMobility.eu**
 - Launch of the InclusiveMobility.eu portal:
 - Supporting the accessibility of information on national and institutional support mechanisms for students with disabilities.
 - 22nd of April 2021
 - Register : <https://epfime.inclusivemobility.eu/>

Contact us

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Please refer to the research report as:
Allinson K., Gabriels W.,(2021). Maybe it will be different abroad;
student and staff perspectives on diversity and inclusion in student
exchanges. SIEM Research Report, siem-project.eu

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